**Case Study: Fish Ponds Park Panteg**

 **Panteg, Torfaen, Gwent**

**Background information:**

Fishponds Park, Panteg historically was a formal gardens, developed for soldiers returning home from World War 1 – a beautiful, peaceful site in the village of Panteg with a view across the valley.

The park, its planting and amenities (bowling green/ tennis courts & fountain) fell to neglect and disrepair as the local council faced budget cuts – as often follows such neglect – vandalism became an issue to this park that is surrounded on all sides by the village itself.

A public meeting was called by local residents and councillors to express their concerns over the potential loss of this space to development, heritage and increasing vandalism – with over 100 people in attendance – this formed the catalyst for the regeneration of this space. The space which held many fond memories for its residents gained community backing and council backing for a community led revival.

A committee of local residents and council members was formed. Building partnerships with the existing organisations active in the park space (the Bowls club/tennis & Torfaen voluntary alliance) were able to secure meeting space in the old Pavillion – enabling the group to have somewhere to work from and meet and base their activities.

**Group aims:**

The Fishponds park group aim was to restore the park – its structures, fountain, amenities and planting – to once again make this community asset somewhere for all and something to be proud of.

To bring its residents together (young and old), build pride, support & resilience in their community and engage everyone in the value of this space to their community. Regularly meeting, cups of tea and a warm welcome are at the heart of this project. Every Friday their Golden Hour (tea and biscuits) are well attended.

**Main audience and volunteers**

There are around 20 volunteers(members) and 40 associated members alongside an activity committee and keen engagement and support from local and ward councillors.

**What the project is achieving**

The group have since restored elements of the Pavillion including roofing, window replacement, toilets and a kitchen. Lovingly brought the fountains back to life, undertaken tree and flower planting across the park. Provided tennis nets and linked in with Sports Wales – bringing young people in to the park throughout the summer.

They have achieved this through a mixture of fundraising, work in kind and community get-togethers. Running an annual Family Event (raising £1000-£2000 from plant and bake sales), pensioners afternoon teas, hosting primary school singing, summer play scheme.

While receiving support & funding from a diverse range of places - the Ward & Parish council (small schemes Fund), Brynafen Housing Association, Melin, Roundtable, Lloyds match funding.

There is no doubt that the wide range of connections the group have and have made as well as the diverse methods they have used to engage with young people – tennis, playgroups, school sessions- has allowed the park to continue to go from strength to strength. With no vandalism and a growing group of support.

**How group got permission to be on the site/ was it difficult?**

From its inception the regeneration of the park space involved residents, councillors and gained the support of local businesses allowing it to undertake a wide range of activities with wide spread support. The site is currently leased through the council and no doubt the hard work from the community, support from councillors and local businesses has ensured they will be able to continue to do so.

**Volunteers Testimony**

We are really proud of what we have achieved as a community – it brings us so much joy to have a space our community can be proud of, that is used and well loved. From our elderly neighbours to the young people using the park – we have come together and what’s been achieved is wonderful.

